
Switchgear Fleet Leadership: Arc Flash Risk, Testing and Renewal Training Course

30 November – 4 December 2026
Amsterdam





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Programme Summary

Switchgear fleet leadership, covering arc flash risk, testing and renewal of medium- and high-voltage circuit breakers, is the subject of this one-week training course for senior electrical and asset leaders at advanced level, ending in a switchgear fleet risk and renewal plan for their site. Ageing switchgear is often run on fixed calendars, with incomplete test data and outdated arc flash studies. The approach moves from failure mechanisms and hazard to condition evidence, strategy and investment. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in switchgear fleet leadership.

The Business Case

A single breaker that fails to interrupt a fault can trip a process unit, damage adjacent panels and injure people nearby. Governing the fleet through risk, evidence and planned renewal turns an unpredictable liability into a managed programme of work.

- Arc Flash Exposure: Falls as incident energy is reassessed and remote switching replaces work in front of energised equipment.
- Unplanned Electrical Outages: Decline as condition data directs maintenance to the breakers most likely to fail.
- Capital Efficiency: Improves as retrofit, refurbishment and replacement are ranked by risk rather than by age alone.

Principles and Evidence Base

- IEC 62271-100 and IEC 62271-200: Requirements for high-voltage circuit breakers and metal-enclosed switchgear frame the ratings reviewed in Session 1.
- NFPA 70B: The maintenance standard structures the equipment condition categories applied in Session 3.
- NFPA 70E and IEEE 1584: Arc flash risk assessment and incident energy calculation inform Session 2.
- ISO 55000: Asset management principles guide the renewal decisions of Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Leaders accountable for safe operation of medium- and high-voltage systems.
- Managers who set electrical maintenance strategy, budgets and test regimes.
- Asset owners who justify switchgear renewal to investment committees.
- Engineering heads who authorise switching programmes and control of electrical work.

The programme serves oil and gas, petrochemical, utility and industrial organisations.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose the principal failure modes of circuit breakers from their design, duty and history.
2. Participants will be able to evaluate arc flash risk and prioritise engineering controls over protective equipment.
3. Participants will be able to interpret contact resistance, insulation, timing and partial discharge results to judge equipment condition.
4. Participants will be able to construct a maintenance strategy that balances time-based and condition-based tasks across the fleet.
5. Participants will be able to justify renewal decisions using risk and whole-life cost, and design governance for safe switching and isolation.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Switchgear Technology and Failure Mechanisms

Why do circuit breakers fail, and what state is the fleet in?

- Interruption Media: Oil, Air, Vacuum and SF6 Compared
- Breaker Duty, Ratings and IEC 62271-100 Type-Test Evidence
- Metal-Enclosed Switchgear Construction Under IEC 62271-200
- Dominant Failure Modes: Mechanism, Insulation and Contact Wear
- Fleet Register and Baseline Condition Profiling

Day 2: Arc Flash Hazard and Safe Switching

How is arc flash exposure quantified and removed from routine work?

- Incident Energy Calculation Using IEEE 1584
- Arc Flash Risk Assessment and the Hierarchy of Controls
- Remote Racking, Arc-Resistant Designs and Maintenance Switches
- Switching Programmes, Isolation and Lockout Procedures
- Electrical Permit to Work and Authorised Person Roles

Day 3: Condition Assessment and Testing Regimes

Which tests reveal the true condition of a breaker or panel?

- Contact Resistance and Insulation Resistance Testing
- Timing, Travel and Trip Coil Current Signature Analysis
- Partial Discharge and Thermographic Surveys
- SF6 Gas Quality, Handling and Vacuum Interrupter Integrity
- NFPA 70B Equipment Condition Categories and Test Intervals



Day 4: Maintenance Strategy and Renewal Decisions

Where should maintenance effort and capital go?

- Time-Based Versus Condition-Based Maintenance Selection
- Health Indexing and Criticality Ranking of Switchgear Assets
- Retrofit, Refurbishment and Replacement Options Appraisal
- Whole-Life Cost and Risk-Based Investment Cases
- SF6 Alternatives and Environmental Obligations in Renewal

Day 5: Applying the Switchgear Fleet Plan

Is the switchgear fleet plan ready for approval?

- Linking Day 3 Condition Evidence to the Day 4 Health Index
- Embedding Day 2 Arc Flash Controls in Maintenance Work Packs
- Electrical Maintenance Programme Governance and Audit
- Fleet Performance Indicators and Management Review
- Switchgear Fleet Risk and Renewal Plan Completion

Methodology

The programme is built around a data workshop. Participants work with a fictional fleet of breakers and panels, with test records, fault history and arc flash studies, and make a fleet owner's decisions. Cases come from a gas plant, a utility substation and a hospital.

- Suggested activity: Ranking a twenty-panel switchboard by health index and criticality.
- Suggested activity: Reviewing a switching programme for isolation gaps and arc flash exposure.
- Suggested activity: Building a retrofit versus replacement case for ageing oil breakers.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a switchgear fleet risk and renewal plan for their site. It contains the fleet register and health index, arc flash control priorities, the test regime by equipment category, a ranked renewal schedule and switching governance. It is used to set the next maintenance budget.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is switchgear fleet leadership training suitable for managers without a protection engineering background?

Yes, if you oversee electrical assets. It is set at advanced level and assumes familiarity with medium-voltage distribution; test methods are explained from first principles.



Which standards does the switchgear fleet leadership programme rest on?

It rests on IEC 62271-100 and IEC 62271-200 for equipment, NFPA 70B for maintenance programmes, NFPA 70E and IEEE 1584 for arc flash, and ISO 55000 for asset management decisions.

How is the switchgear fleet risk and renewal plan used at work?

You can use it to set test intervals, present a ranked capital request for renewal and agree arc flash controls with operations.

How does switchgear fleet leadership training differ from a course on power system protection?

Protection courses address relay settings and fault coordination. This programme addresses the condition, safety, maintenance and renewal of the circuit breakers that act on those settings.